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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

~~SECRET~~

CLASSIFICATION - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

(When Filled In) NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM REPORT NO. TDCS DB-3/6557605

SUBJECT MAJOR GENERAL DUONG VAN MINH COMMENTS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION AND ON THE NEED FOR A CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM DATE DISTR: 18 JULY 1963 EDCW:VNC PRECEDENCE ROUTINE

DATE OF INFO 8-25-13-216 JULY 1963 COMMENT THIS IS THE REFERENCES LINE WITH FID 82003

PLACE & DATE ACQ. VIETNAM, SAIGON (17 JULY 1963) HAS TAKEN WITH REGARD TO THE

APPRaisal SEE BELOW FIELD REPORT NO. FVS-9322

-THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE

SOURCE

APPR GENERAL DUONG VAN MINH PROBABLY HOLDS THESE VIEWS AND MADE THESE STATEMENTS
IS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN DISGRUNTLED WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM SINCE 1960.
EVEN THOUGH HE HAS NOT SO EXPRESSED HIMSELF IN RECENT TIMES

1. SUMMARY: ON 16 JULY 1963 MAJOR GENERAL DUONG VAN MINH, HVO, AND THE CAO TRI WERE YET SIBONCES THAN THE BODDHIST. THE MILITARY ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT DIEM, CRITICIZED THE PRESIDENT, SAID THAT HE LACKED THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE, AND ADVOCATED A CHANGE IN THE REGIME, BUT ASSERTED THAT NGO DINH NHU COULD NOT TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO SAID THAT BRIGADIER GENERAL DO CAO TRI WOULD REMAIN IN COMMAND OF THE 1ST DIVISION.

2. GENERAL MINH MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

A. PRESIDENT DIEM HAS CHANGED SO COMPLETELY THAT IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE TO REASON WITH HIM. IN THE EARLY DAYS HE HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE AND WAS VERY POPULAR THROUGHOUT SOUTH VIETNAM.

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GROUP 1
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declassification

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STATE/DIR

TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

SECRETARY OF THE ARMY - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

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IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER AT THAT TIME TO GAIN THE SUPPORT OF THE

PEASANTS FOR THE VARIOUS PROGRAMS OF THE GOVERNMENT. THEN HE BEGAN
SCREENING HIMSELF IN AND BY 1959 HE HAD LOST COMPLETE TOUCH WITH THE
PEOPLE. THAT MAY HAVE BEEN THE TIME TO HAVE CHANGED THE GOVERNMENT.

AFTER 1960 DIEM CHANGED COMPLETELY, BECOMING CONVINCED THAT HE WAS
OPERATING UNDER A MANDATE FROM HEAVEN. THIS WAS APPARENT IN HIS

REMARKS ON 7 JULY WHEN HE SAID THAT THE COUNTRY WAS GUIDED BY

"INTUITIVE WISDOM."

THE BUDDHIST ISSUE IS AN ILLUSTRATION OF DIEM'S IRRATIONAL

ATTITUDE. DIEM TOLD MINH ON 13 JULY THAT THE BINH XUYEN, THE HOA

HAO, AND THE CAO DAT WERE ALL STRONGER THAN THE BUDDHISTS. THEY

HAD REGULAR ARMED TROOPS BUT THE GOVERNMENT WAS STILL ABLE TO

DEFEAT THEM, SO WHY CANNOT THE GOVERNMENT ALSO DEFEAT THE MONKS,

WHO HAVE NEITHER ARMS NOR MILITARY ORGANIZATION? MINH WAS UNABLE

TO CONVINCCE THE PRESIDENT THAT THE SITUATIONS WERE NOT THE SAME

BECAUSE OF THE RIGID STAND DIEM HAS TAKEN WITH REGARD TO THE

BUDDHISTS. COMMENT. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME MINH HAS MADE

SUCH STRONG STATEMENTS AGAINST DIEM.)

THE BUDDHIST PROBLEM IS FAR FROM SETTLED. IT IS BECOMING

WORSE AND UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT CHANGES ITS POLICY THERE WILL BE

ADDITIONAL BUDDHIST SELFIMMOLATIONS. THERE MUST BE A CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT, SOUTH VIETNAM

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IS LIKE A YOUNG TREE; IT HAS FIRM ROOTS AND IS GROWING BUT IT MUST HAVE A PROPER ATMOSPHERE SO THAT ITS LEAVES, I.E., THE PEOPLE, CAN BREATHE. THE AIR IS LACKING IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

THE E. LINGO DINH NHU CAN NEVER TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT; (SHOULD HE SUCCEED, IT WOULD PROVE THAT THE VIET CONG (VC) ARE RIGHT IN CLAIMING THAT THE VC ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO REALLY FIGHT FOR THE PEOPLE.) COMMENT: MAJOR GENERAL TRAN VAN DON, COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMY, AND BRIGADIER GENERAL LE VAN KIM, MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, (ARE MINH'S CLOSE FRIENDS.) (FVS-9243, TDCS-3/552,503, 11 NOV 67.) (FVS-9256, TDCS-3/552,565, 11 NOV 67.) PRESIDENT NGUYEN NGOC THO TOLD MINH ON 15 JULY THAT IT WAS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BUDDHISTS AND THE GOVERNMENT BECAUSE THE SELF-RIDE OF CERTAIN KEY INDIVIDUALS, SUCH AS THE HUSBAND AND ARCHBISHOP NGUYEN DINH THUC, HAD TO BECOME INVOLVED. THO HAS BEEN WANTING TO RESIGN BUT WAS NOT EVEN PERMITTED TO SUBMIT A LETTER OF RESIGNATION; HE STILL INTENDS TO GO THROUGH WITH IT, HOWEVER. (FIELD COMMENT: FVS-9243, TDCS-3/552,503, 11 NOV 67.)

H.) REPORTED THAT DIEM HAD REFUSED TO ACCEPT THO'S WRITTEN RESIGNATION, AS SUBMITTED ON 7 JULY. FVS-9256, TDCS-3/552,565, REPORTED THO'S STATEMENT THAT HE WANTED TO RESIGN BUT WAS UNCERTAIN AS TO THE TIMING.) THE MINING OF THE ARMY AGAINST THE VC IS NOT SIMPLE.

G. IF THE MILITARY PRESSURE AGAINST THE VC CAN BE CONTINUED

AT THE PRESENT RATE FOR A YEAR, THE ARMY CAN DISRUPT THE VC ARMED

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INSURGENTS. THE WINNING OF THE WAR AGAINST THE VC IS NOT SIMPLY A MILITARY PROBLEM, HOWEVER, BUT ONE THAT REQUIRES THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE, AND THIS IS LACKING.

H. NO TROUBLE IS ANTICIPATED FROM THE VC ON THE 20 JULY ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE GENEVA ACCORDS, BUT THE STUDENTS MIGHT CAUSE TROUBLE BECAUSE OF THE SUICIDE OF OPPOSITIONIST NGUYEN TUONG TAM, WHO HAS BEEN PROMOTED TO BRIGADIER GENERAL. EVEN THIS BRIGADIER GENERAL DO CAO TRI WILL REMAIN IN COMMAND OF THE 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION FOR THE TIME BEING AND BRIGADIER GENERAL LE VAN NGHIEM WILL REMAIN IN COMMAND OF 4 CORPS, WHICH PLACES NGHIEM IN AN IMPOSSIBLE POSITION AS THE TWO MEN DO NOT GET ALONG WELL WITH EACH OTHER. TRI'S PROMOTION WAS DESERVED BECAUSE HE IS A VERY STRONG FIGHTER. (FIELD COMMENT. FVS-9302, (TDCSDB-3/655, 512, REPORTED NHU'S STATEMENT (THAT TRI HAD BEEN PROMOTED AND NAMED COMMANDER OF 4 CORPS. FVS-9267, (TDCSDB-3/552, 405, REPORTED NGHIEM'S STATEMENT OF HIS DESIRE TO RESIGN FROM THE ARMY.)

3. FIELD DISSEM, HQ STATE (AMBASSADOR (NOLTING), USMACV (GENERAL HARKINS ONLY), CINCPAC/PACFLT (ARPAC/PACAF).

END OF MESSAGE

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